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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002054

SIPDIS

DEPT. FOR EUR/SE AND NEA/NGA; BAGHDAD ALSO FOR CJTF-7

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/08/2024

TAGS: PREL MARR MOPS TU IZ

SUBJECT: IRAQ: TURKISH FM SAYS TURKEY WON'T SEND TROOPS,  
IMPLIES COALITION DIFFICULTIES RESULT OF LISTENING TO IRAQI  
KURDS RATHER THAN TURKISH ADVICE

REF: A. STATE 74537

1B. FBIS GMP20040408000044

1C. FBIS GMP20040408000018

(U) Classified by Acting DCM Scot Marciel. Reasons 1.4 b and d.

11. (SBU) We delivered Ref A demarche requesting supportive public statements about coalition action against Jaysh al-Mahdi in Iraq to the Turkish MFA Iraq desk April 5. At time of delivery the Turks made no comment. On April 8, Turkish FM Gul, as reported in Refs A and B, said the future dispatch of Turkish troops to Iraq was "out of the question," and implied that the current violence in Iraq was in part a result of the US having focused on the Iraqi Kurds while ignoring Iraq's Shiite community, and of having attached more importance to the views of Iraqi (Kurdish) groups than to advice offered by Turkey. See quotes from Ref A and B texts at paras 2 and 3.

12. (C) Asked by journalists April 8 about reports that the US may have again requested Turkish troops for Iraq, FM Gul replied, "At one time we made such a proposal and it was not seen as appropriate. From now on, dispatching Turkish troops is out of the question." MFA spokesman Namik Tan (protect) told Deputy Pol-Mil Counselor that night that the FM would likely have made a similar statement even if the press had not asked the question. Tan noted that the MFA had inserted talking points in the FM's briefing materials after reading William Safire's early April op ed in the New York Times suggesting that Turkish troops be used to stabilize the situation in Iraq.

13. (U) In an interview the same day with Turkish television, Gul said the coalition in Iraq was facing "mass resistance," and added, "we have from the beginning been telling a country that is our ally the realities that we know. I, however, believe that the analysis was not done well because they are faced with a culture that is alien to them. They relied too much on certain groups within Iraq instead of heeding the recommendations made by their allies. That turned out to be wrong...They attached more importance to certain groups within Iraq which they considered to be their allies. That led them to certain mistakes." When asked if he thought that a balance of arms in favor of Kurds in Iraq led the US to ignore the Shiite community/majority, Gul replied, "You are now clarifying what I tried to say discreetly a while ago. Such mistakes were committed."

14. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.

EDELMAN